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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a program to increase motivation and interest in social studies among fourth-grade students in a growing middle class community in central Illinois. The lack of motivation and disinterest in social studies is evidenced by student attitude surveys, teacher surveys, teacher observations of student time on task, and student reflection journals. Students and teacher reported a lack of student motivation and interest in social studies and too little time devoted to the subject matter. Three major categories of intervention were identified including: (1) the implementation of lessons utilizing multiple intelligences; (2) application of cooperative learning strategies; and (3) use of student reflection journals. The research concluded with a final student survey showing an increase in students choosing social studies as the favorite subject. Multiple intelligences and cooperative learning showed a positive effect on student motivation. Student reflection journals were only written periodically so no conclusions can be made on the impact of reflection journals on student motivation. Seven appendices offer student and teacher surveys, as well as lesson plans and activities for active engagement. (EH)

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FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE MOTIVATION IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program to increase motivation and interest in social studies. The targeted population consists of fourth grade students in a growing middle class community located in central Illinois. The lack of motivation and disinterest in social studies is evidenced by student attitude surveys, teacher surveys, teacher observations of student time on task, and student reflection journals.

Probable cause data showed students reported a lack of motivation and interest in social studies. Teachers reported similar results and included information regarding too little time being devoted to the subject matter. Researchers' initial observations indicated a lack of participation and enthusiasm on the part of the students. Reviews of current literature revealed curricular over emphasis on social studies textbooks and techniques that do not engage all children.

A review of educational literature, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in three major categories for change: the implementation of lessons utilizing multiple intelligences, application of cooperative learning strategies, and use of student reflection journals.

The research concluded with a final student survey showing an increase in students choosing social studies as the favorite subject. Multiple intelligences and cooperative learning showed a positive effect on student motivation. Although student reflection journals were very well done, they were only written periodically. For this reason no conclusions can be made on the impact of reflection journals on student motivation.

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CHAPTER 1
PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT
General Statement of the Problem

Can a small mid-western elementary school make social studies an integral and exciting part of the school day and increase student motivation? There has been so much emphasis placed on raising state and district test scores in mathematics and reading that social studies in elementary classrooms has quite often been set aside, ignored completely, or has been relegated to the last half hour of the school day.

As a result, knowledge of the world and the environment is very limited in many elementary classrooms. Students view social studies as being dull, outdated, and unnecessary to their lives. Many school districts do not always emphasize the importance of allotting regular time in the school day for social studies. Reading and mathematics take priority when updating texts and curriculum, and many schools are using outdated texts, maps, and other materials in social studies. Because of the amount of time necessary to research effectively and to gather needed materials, teachers simply do not include social studies in their daily curriculum. There is little teacher training in this area. Many teachers use more traditional methods or an unstructured curriculum, which do not elicit enthusiasm, promote student participation, or initiate critical thinking.

The students in the targeted fourth grade class at the small Midwestern school exhibit lack of motivation and interest in social studies. The lack of motivation and disinterest in social studies may be evidenced by student attitude surveys, teacher surveys, teacher observations of student time on task, and student reflection journals. Possible causes may include: traditional teaching methods that do not reach the students; lack of teacher attention to the subject area; and inadequate use of students' prior knowledge and interests.

Immediate Problem Context

The targeted school currently has an enrollment of 355 students. The students' racial and ethnic backgrounds consist of 86.2% White, 7.5% Black, 2.6% Hispanic, 2.3% Asian/Pacific Islander and 1.4% Native American. Low income households comprise 23% of the student population. The school does not have a chronic truancy problem and 95.6% is the average rate of student attendance. In comparison to the rest of the mobility statistics, the targeted school has a low mobility rate of 12.6%.

The building currently has three full-time teachers at each grade level, kindergarten through fifth. There is also one full-time behavior disorder teacher who has the help of a full-time aide. Support staff includes a full-time learning disabilities teacher and aide, part-time speech therapist, school psychologist, outreach worker, and computer resource person. Half-time staff include four fine arts teachers, three first grade reading aides, three kindergarten aides, and one school nurse. The office personnel includes two full-time secretaries and one principal. There are seven food service workers and two custodians.

Two faculty members have their Education Specialist Degree while five have their Master's degree. The faculty has a wide range of teaching experience varying from one to thirty years. The median years of experience is thirteen.

The small Midwestern school was built on four acres in 1969 as a middle school. In the late 1970's the school district started experiencing financial difficulties and decreasing enrollments. As a remedy to these problems, the school district closed nine elementary schools, abandoned the middle school concept and moved the sixth grades into the two junior high schools. The six middle school buildings were converted into elementary buildings in 1981.

The middle schools were built with the open concept. There were no doors on the classrooms in the pods and originally there were only partial walls dividing the classrooms. When converting the buildings for the elementary students, the walls were enclosed to the ceiling, but the rooms were left with no doors. The current school buildings are divided into three wings, or pods, of six classrooms. Pod A houses grades three and four, Pod B houses grades one and two, and kindergarten and grade five are in Pod C. In addition to the kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms, there is a gymnasium that serves as cafeteria and auditorium, an art room, a music room, a learning center, and a computer lab. Six smaller rooms are used for various activities such as speech therapy, student counseling, learning disabilities classes, and tutorial centers. As in other buildings, the offices for principal, secretary, and school nurse are located in the main hallway. The targeted school has one large room used for the district behavior disorder class for grades three through five.

Programs currently in place at the school include Rising Stars Tutoring, Polite is Right Social Skills, Parent and Teacher Talk Time, Write On, Positive Alternative for Latchkey Students (P.A.L.S.), a breakfast program, Parent and Teacher Organization (P.T.O.), and the High School Aide Program.

Rising Stars Tutoring program meets twice a week. Teachers identify one student per classroom, grades one through three, who will most benefit from having a tutor. Each child is paired with a high school student and the partners work together for the entire year. The meetings are supervised by a high school faculty member and take place in a classroom.

Polite is Right Social Skills is a program that was designed by the school's Life Skills Committee. The committee designed twenty-seven lessons in conjunction with published programs emphasizing proper school decorum. The teachers have been trained in the implementation of the program. This allows classes and individual children to earn Polite is Right coupons from staff members. The students are rewarded with coupons for being polite. Every two weeks each class's coupons are collected and tallied. Classes in each pod with the most points are awarded a traveling trophy and an individual coupon is drawn for a Polite is Right shirt.

Parent and Teacher Talk Time meetings are held monthly and free child care is provided. Each meeting is set around a specific theme such as, helping your child enjoy school or educational activities to do with your child. The presentations are facilitated by teachers and involved parents. All parents are invited to attend.

The school Write-On program encourages students to become young authors. Each quarter students select a writing of their choice to be entered into a writing contest. The entries are judged by teachers in the school. A first, second, third, and most improved award are given. Winning pieces are displayed on the front hall bulletin board.

P.A.L.S. is a program that is sponsored in conjunction with the local YMCA. Children whose parents work before or after regular school hours have a safe, supervised place to stay. The children have the opportunity to play with each other and are offered learning experiences through visits by special guests.

The school breakfast program is partially funded by the state. Children are able to receive a hot, nutritious breakfast before school. This program feeds approximately twenty-five children each morning.

A Parent and Teacher Organization (P.T.O.) is an active program in the school. The P.T.O. is a group of parents and teachers who discuss issues and find better ways to educate the student population. The organization raises funds to support the efforts of the faculty in educating the children at the school. This organization has helped develop an extensive learning center, helped equip the computer lab, construct a handicapped accessible playground, and has given extra funds to teachers for their classroom supplies.

The High School Aide Program provides an opportunity for child care students to use the skills learned in course work while under the supervision of teachers. The high school students spend an hour working with elementary classes four days a week. The fifth day they spend in their high school classroom. This program gives the teachers more one-on-one time, or small group time with children in their classes. The high school students are also responsible for presenting at least one project during the nine weeks.

The Surrounding Community

The community public school system is a unit district, with grades prekindergarten through twelve. One primary building houses the district's prekindergarten and Head Start programs. There are seven elementary buildings (K-5), two middle school buildings (6-8) and one high school (9-12).

Only two of the elementary schools did not qualify for Title I funds. The high school offers the Phoenix Program which is an alternative educational program for behaviorally challenged students. Day care is provided for all high school students with children. Within the community, there are two parochial schools (grades K-8). The city has a community college and a four year Liberal Arts college.

The public school administrative structure consists of one superintendent, an assistant superintendent for curriculum, and an assistant superintendent for personnel. Each individual building has a principal, with an additional vice-principal at each of the middle schools and the high school.

The community is comprised of 37,000 people. The largest portion of the employed population, 31.3%, are blue collar workers, while approximately 20% are involved in professional and managerial positions. The other main areas of occupation include sales, 11%; service, 14%; farming and technical, both at under 5%. The median effective household buying income for the community is \$29,710. While the median income is above \$20,000, there exists a large portion of the population, 31%, earning under \$20,000. Only 8.5% of the residents are college graduates and 38.3% have graduated from high school.

Within the city there are several churches that meet the spiritual needs of the various religious and ethnic groups. There are forty-five Protestant churches, three Roman Catholic churches, and one Jewish synagogue. The majority of the population in the community is White, 92.9%, followed by African American, 5.1%, and other, 2.0%. The majority of the residents of the community are between the ages of 25-44, with the smallest sector being between the ages of 15-24.

Community support for the schools includes Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), school business sponsors, community members on district committees, Parent Advisory Committee, and the city Technology Center.

D.A.R.E. is a program which starts in third grade with a law enforcement officer coming in once a week to help children learn ways to avoid situations involving drugs. The officer tells of the dangers of drug abuse and has the children involved in role playing to practice drug resistance. The fourth graders do not receive formal D.A.R.E. training from the officer, but are encouraged to participate in a drug free poster contest and a D.A.R.E. walk-a-thon. In fifth grade the officer again comes to initiate discussion. At this time the children are introduced to some high school role models whom they can emulate. This shows the students that the program is effective if followed. After completing the D.A.R.E. program the fifth graders are presented with certificates at a graduation ceremony. At this ceremony the superintendent of the district talks to the children to express pride in their completing the program and knowing the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Businesses have joined the district in an Adopt-a-School Program. Each school has one or more sponsors from the community. Schools provide student work for their sponsor's bulletin boards and free advertising for the businesses in school newsletters. The businesses in return donate money and materials that support their adopted schools. This program has allowed the school and community to work together to reach the common goal of better educating children.

Community members have taken active roles on the District Improvement Team and the District Technology Committee. Meetings are held once a month to discuss issues concerning the district. Communication between the community and schools has increased through the efforts of these community members.

The Parent Advisory Committee is a group of parents who come together with the administration to provide insights on issues concerning the district. The group meets once a month. These meetings are another effort on the part of the school district to stay in constant communication with members of the community.

The city Technology Center was opened in 1996. It was a joint effort between the public school district, the community college, and the four year college that are located in the town. Together these institutions have built a technology center, available for all to use, that is equipped with up-to-date technology. School children can take classes to help them learn more about computers and the use of the internet. College students can use the facilities to communicate with instructors around the world. Some college level courses are being offered via satellite. Community members can explore the whole new world of technology as a means of finding information and communicating with others. Businesses have held meetings there to train employees on the use of computers and the Internet.

Within the past few years the public schools' boundaries have been changed to equalize the elementary school populations, but with the construction of one federally subsidized housing facility and plans being made for another, there may again be a disparity in enrollments. The two complexes are both within one elementary school's boundary, thus enlarging the school's population and reducing the number of students in other buildings as families relocate to other housing. This may call for another reorganization of school neighborhoods to avoid overcrowding or underutilization.

Another effect of the apartment complexes will be on the mobility rate between neighborhood schools. At present, the district has a relatively low mobility rate of 21.7% and the mobility rate of the neighborhood school which will be accommodating students from these apartments is even lower at 12.6%. Due to the rigid income requirements of a federally subsidized housing facility, the mobility rate for families

living there is high, impacting the mobility of the school and district. As a result, this rate of mobility affects the educational services for students.

The recent influx of consumer businesses has brought a new generation of workers and their families, as well as new community problems. The opening of a Cub Foods store elicited picketers from nearby unions. Many local family-owned businesses are being bought out by larger corporations. While these businesses provide much needed income, they also affect the small town atmosphere of the community.

The employment opportunities afforded by these companies affect the community in positive ways as well. For example, if job requirements include a high school diploma, more students are motivated to finish school. The managerial positions encourage people to pursue higher degrees. Therefore, this economic growth influences the community in both positive and negative ways.

National Context of the Problem

The process of becoming a productive member of a community starts with learning and achieving as early as preschool or kindergarten in the academic environment. This achievement in the academic environment continues throughout a person's lifetime. This process is influenced, according to experts in the field of education, by a variety of factors.

In the search for excellence, administrators and teachers in communities across the country are looking for ways to improve the quality of education for their students, and thereby improving the economic quality of the community. Gardner stated (March 1997) that the key was to personalize the teaching in our classrooms. Given the variety of learning styles in every classroom, Gardner said teachers must design lessons to reach all students. The methods being used to teach social studies in many classrooms were not reaching enough students. The motivational problem was

evidenced by the average test scores, lack of interest, and results of countrywide surveys that showed children and adults knew very little about the geography or history of their country. Cotton wrote, "Various reports on the state of American education have found that our young people suffer from historical amnesia, geographic disorientation, and civic ignorance. Statistics on adult civic behavior are no more reassuring" (1997, p.3). If this is the case, then the members of the educational community have a large task ahead of them.

According to Fogarty (1997) there were two arenas of research impacting the educational scene: brain research and school reform. Advocates who were voicing the need for school reform suggested the need for models of schooling that embraced more learner centered structures. Fogarty also suggested that instruction and assessment were the basis of what happens with learners in the classroom, and, if that was the case, then curriculum was the foundation of school programs.

In the area of curriculum, Gardner (1995) stated that schools attempted to cover too much material and that superficial or little understanding was the result. He added that it was more beneficial to spend a significant amount of time on key concepts and essential questions.

In the future models of instruction are needed that will provide the educational community, as well as the community at large, with the opportunities that challenge student thinking and productivity. Students need to be challenged to think about authentic problems and issues confronting our society.

This process starts in the elementary schools, and teachers should be willing to take the challenge to provide education that is meaningful and that will excite students to learn about history: past, present, and future. A realistic and purposeful endeavor is to see how the relationship of teaching pertains to this pursuit of a better level of

understanding and a more avid interest in social studies. As Lazear so aptly phrased it, "... I find myself an advocate for the "giftedness" of every child, if only we as teachers can find the keys to unlock their full potential" (1991, p.xi).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of student lack of motivation and interest in elementary social studies observation checklists, student surveys, and teacher surveys were noted. (See appendices A,B,C)

The researchers distributed an attitude survey (Appendix C) to the twenty students in the targeted group of fourth graders on the first day of school. Fifty percent of the students referred to social studies as being boring. Twenty percent didn't think it was important to know things that happened in the past because, "it already happened." All twenty students felt however that it was important to read a map. Twenty five percent thought it wasn't important to know about people and other cultures. The attitude survey showed that verbal linguistic activities most frustrated students in social studies. All of the activities that students listed as making social studies more interesting fell into the other multiple intelligences. Ideas that were suggested were playing games, going on field trips, doing more projects, eating food, and learning more about themselves.

Figure 1 shows that students noted that math was their favorite subject with science being close behind. As seen in Figures 1 and 2 none ranked social studies as their favorite subject and 25% listed social studies as their least favorite subject. However, of the fourteen teachers who responded, to the teacher survey, all fourteen thought the students had average-to-high enjoyment of the social studies curriculum.

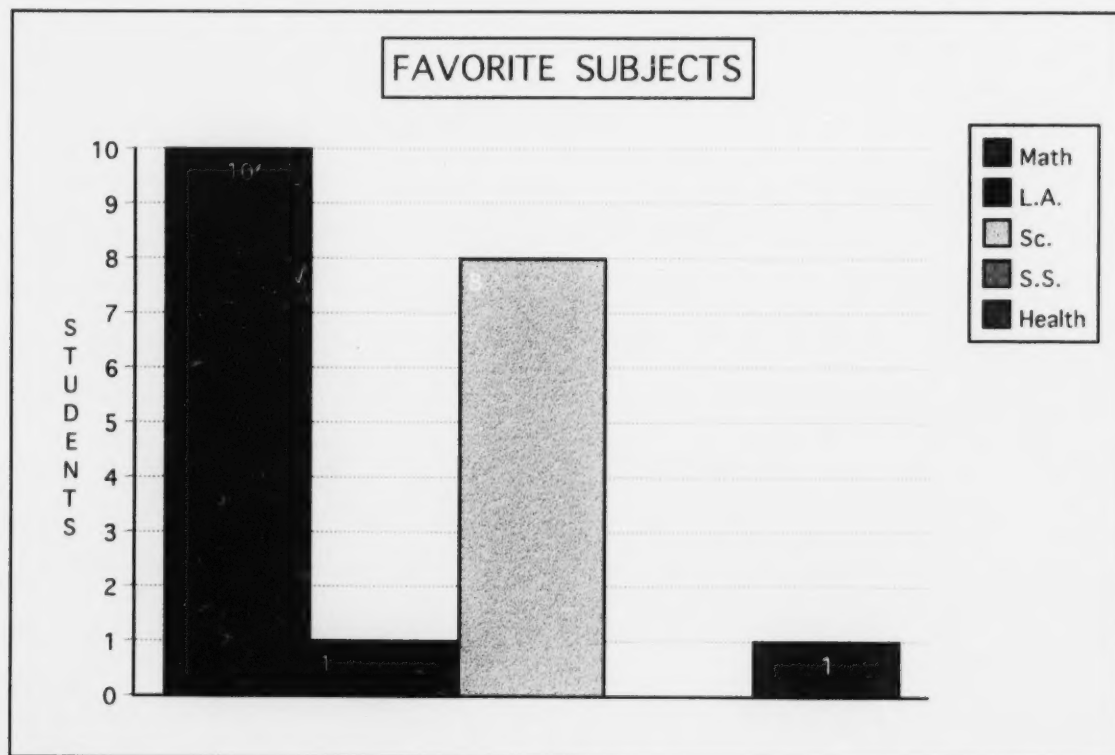


Figure 1 Students' Favorite Subjects

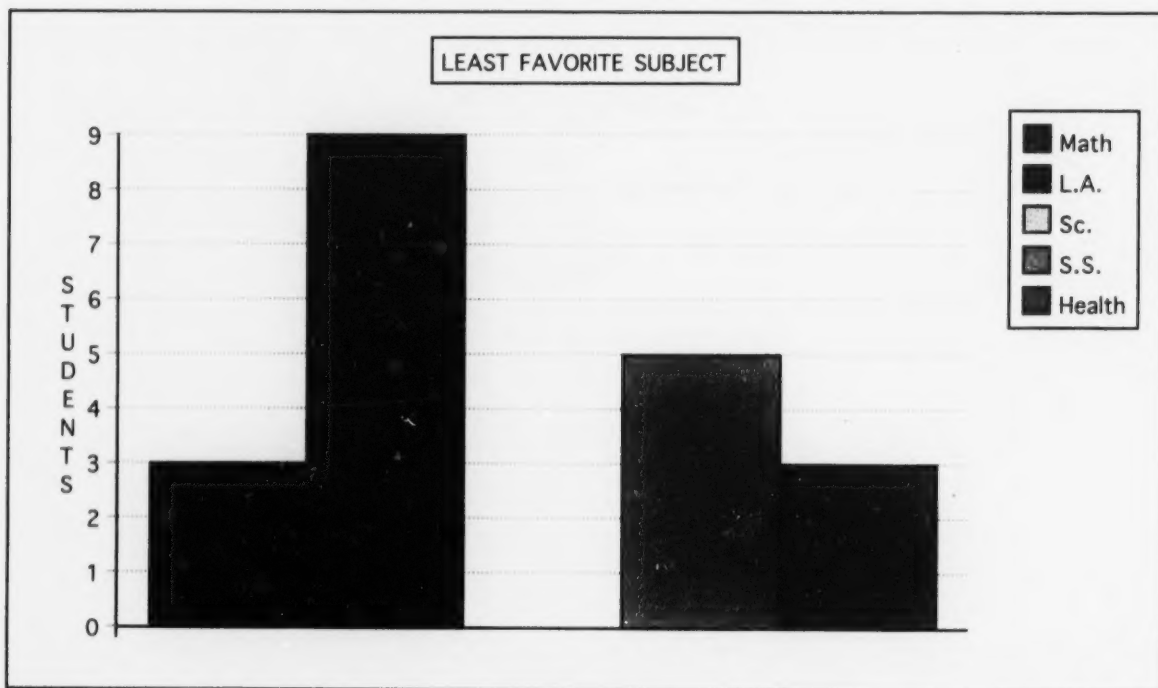


Figure 2 Students' Least Favorite Subject

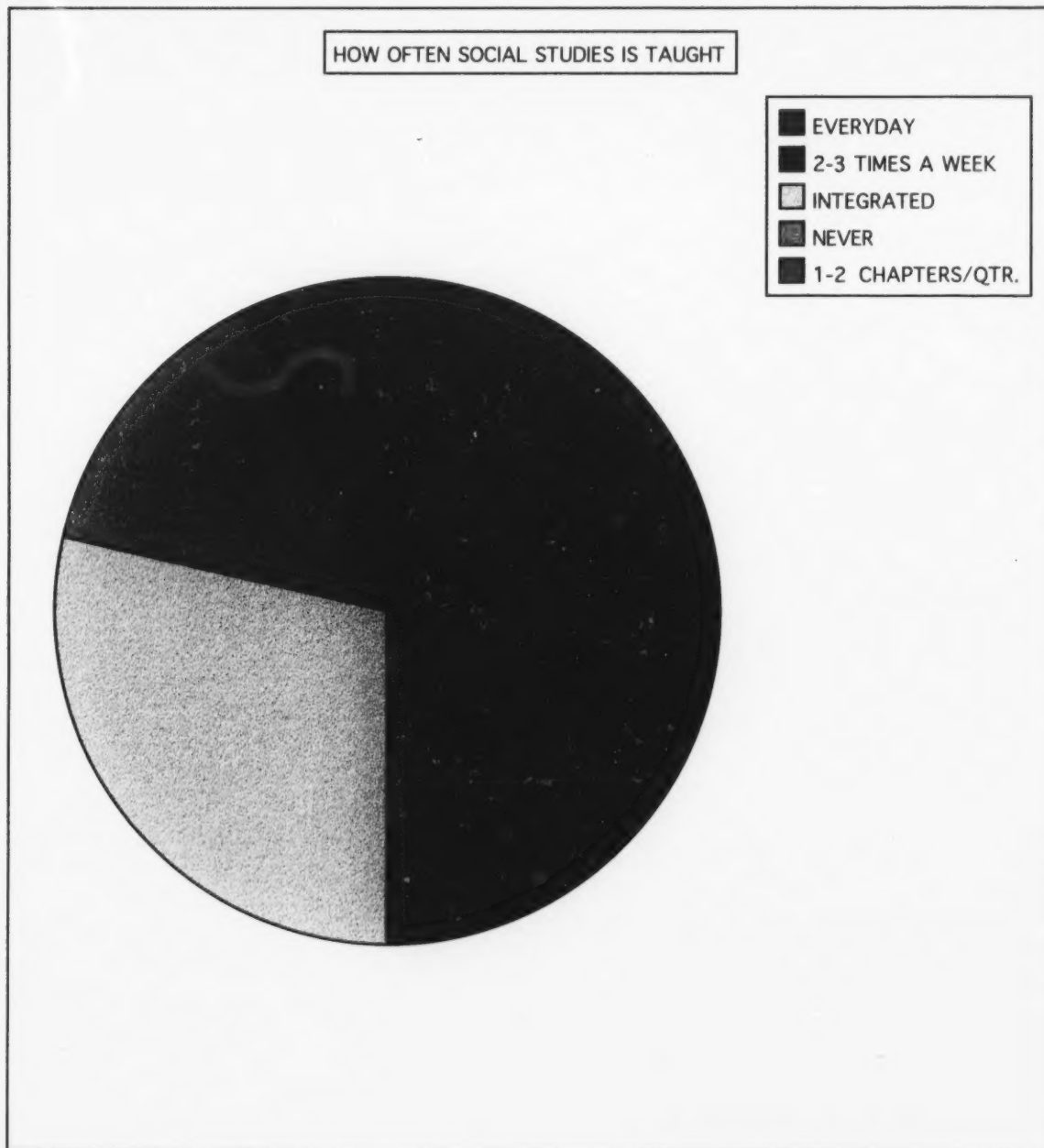


Figure 3 How Often Social Studies is Taught in the Elementary Classroom

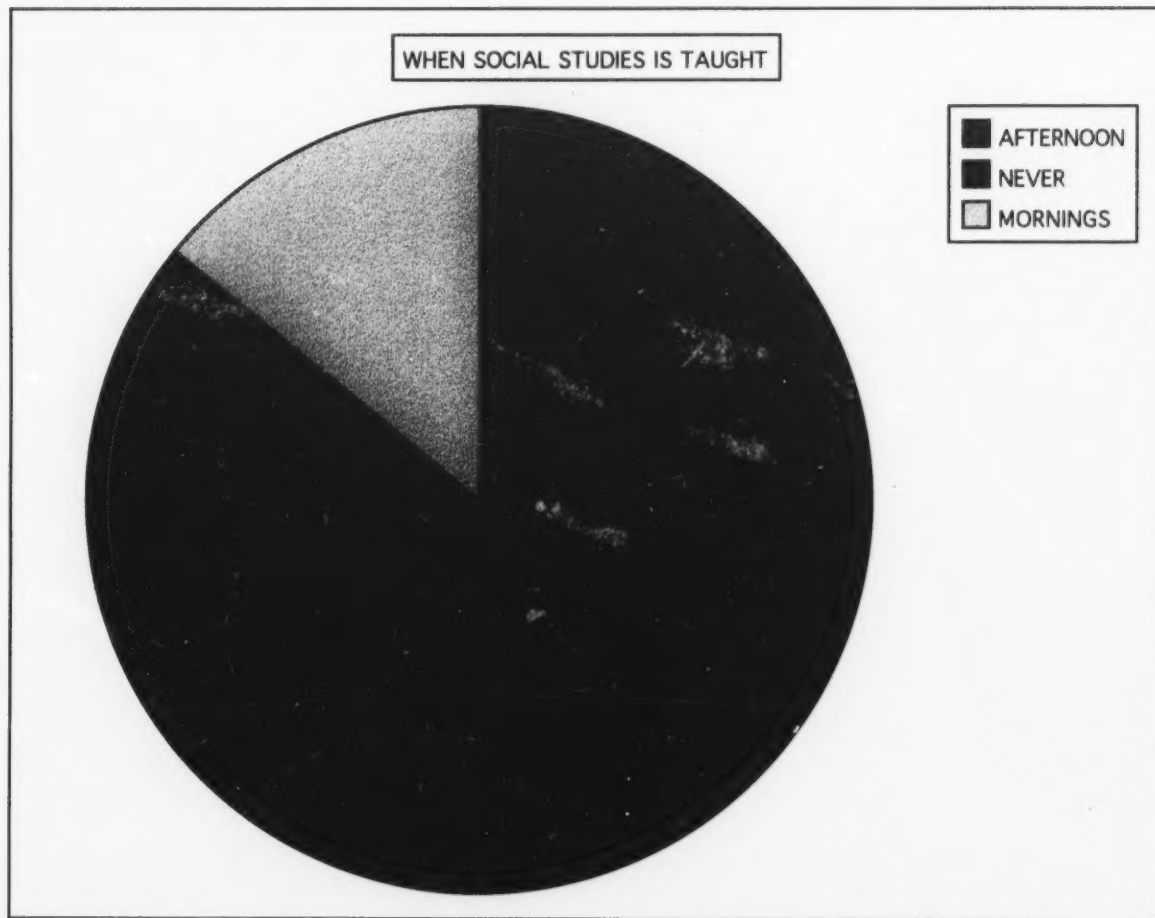


Figure 4 When Social Studies is Taught in the Elementary Classroom

As represented by the above figures, the majority of teachers taught social studies only two to three times a week in the afternoons. The most common reason for not teaching social studies every day was lack of time. Many teachers commented that the school district does not deem social studies important. No district curriculum for social studies has been developed in over ten years; while other areas such as math, language arts and science have been updated and revised several times in the last few years. When asked what would help to improve social studies instruction, teachers gave a variety of suggestions including, being provided with more up to date materials, training, and the development of a district curriculum.

Probable Causes

Possible causes for lack of student motivation and interest in elementary social studies may include: student prior knowledge not being used, teaching methods not reaching students, and teachers not devoting time to social studies. This was evidenced as a problem at the targeted school through teacher surveys, student surveys, and observation checklists.

Many educational literature sources substantiate these probable causes for the motivation and interest problems in the elementary classroom. In an article written by Woodward, Elliott, and Nagel (1986) the authors stated that textbooks played a dominant role in the K-6 social studies curriculum. The authors also felt that social studies was not considered an exciting and important subject in the elementary school curriculum. Better and more varied materials must be published and thoughtfully selected. Not only do these materials need to be more carefully chosen, but also teachers need to take student prior knowledge into account when using these materials.

Using the textbook alone does not hold student interest or use their prior knowledge. Through the use of prior knowledge students can internalize what is being taught and how it affects their lives. Hoge (1986) stated in his article, "Improving the Use of Elementary Social Studies Textbooks," that often textbooks regulated social studies instruction. While textbooks are a good resource, they need to be used in conjunction with other materials.

Current teaching methods being employed are not reaching all students in the elementary social studies classroom. "To teach anything, the teacher first must get the child's attention, get the child to care enough to learn." (Banks, 1982, p43). When teaching invites students to become involved with activity based lessons, more learning styles are being addressed. Passive listening does not meet the learning needs of most students. Lessons are all too often taught through lecture, worksheets and tests. Goodlad's study (as cited in Burke, 1994) found that many teachers lecture 88% of the time, while students' attentiveness lasts only ten to twenty minutes. Therefore, students are not retaining pertinent subject information. McGowan, Sutton, and Smith (1990) found that competitive classrooms, where students are encouraged to work primarily in isolation, are not improving social studies attitudes. Furthermore, Brooks and Brooks (1993) maintained that most American classrooms structurally discourage cooperation and require students to work independently. Teachers are not updating their methods to meet the variety of students' needs in a rapidly changing world.

Finally, teachers are not giving social studies curriculum the deserved time or attention. In many elementary classrooms emphasis is placed on reading and mathematics. Parker (1989) cited that the social studies curriculum has been pushed aside to make time for these test-driven topics or subject areas that are perceived to be

more important by the teacher or school district. Parker also claimed that many elementary teachers are skipping social studies completely.

In conclusion, possible causes for a lack of student motivation in social studies at the targeted school were evidenced in teacher surveys, student surveys, and observation checklists. The researchers identified from the data that textbook driven curriculum, direct teaching, and lack of attention by the students were problems in social studies education. Educational researchers supported these findings in the literature review.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences encompasses seven different intelligences; Logical/Mathematical Intelligence, Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence, Spatial Intelligence, Musical Intelligence, Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, and Intrapersonal Intelligence. By using these intelligences educators are able to meet many of the different learning styles of children. Frischer (1997) agreed with Gardner that all children are unique. They bring a variety of talents, backgrounds and "intelligences" with them to the classroom. Frischer's article reinforced the use of multiple intelligences to reach each child in ways he can understand.

Gardner (1995) originally did not intend for the theory to be used in the schools. Gardner developed the theory to promote controversy among other psychologists because he was critical of current views of the intelligences within the discipline of psychology. Nevertheless, educators are employing the theory and Gardner has suggested three positive uses for multiple intelligences to be employed in the classroom. First, Gardner stated that educators should cultivate the desired skills and capabilities that are deemed important by the community and society in general. Giving attention to intelligences that may otherwise be ignored may be necessary to teach these skills that are relevant to the community needs. For example, teaching to

the interpersonal intelligence in each child, and educating children on how to work together, will forward a societal goal of getting along.

Second, Gardner suggested approaching concepts, subject matter and disciplines in a variety of ways. He reported that studying one topic in a more in-depth manner rather than the surface study of many topics is more beneficial. Once a topic has been addressed in a variety of manners there are three desirable outcomes that can be met: more students are reached, students feel like experts in a specific content area and students are able to feel comfortable displaying new understandings.

Finally, Gardner maintained that in a true multiple intelligence school, personalization of education needs to be a priority. None of us are the same, therefore our minds are all different. Schools need to take these dissimilarities into account when developing their curricula, pedagogy, and assessment. Considering these differences makes education work more effectively.

The Multiple Intelligence Theory has become an integral part of many teacher's lesson development. The New City School in St. Louis, Missouri, is a good example. In 1989 the staff began an effort to implement the Multiple Intelligence Theory (Hoerr, 1992). The faculty agreed that too much emphasis was being placed on standardized test scores. These educators also noted that most of the school's curriculum focused on language and math. After much staff training and planning, the theory was put into practice during the 1990-91 school year with very positive results. Teachers developed a curriculum with units that incorporated each of the seven intelligences. Hoerr (1992) states,

"Our implementation of multiple intelligences has made all of us learners, and we have all benefited. We have also reaffirmed our belief that each child has special talents and that it is our job to identify and cultivate them." (67)

Clara Barton School in Minneapolis, Minnesota is another example of a school that has incorporated the Multiple Intelligence Theory. After instructing the students in the intelligences, teachers used the theory as a way to help their students set goals for themselves. By internalizing individual intelligences, students were motivated to improve in these areas. Students were also able to recognize and appreciate varied intelligences in their peers. In addition, parents had an increased respect for their child's abilities (Ellison, 1992).

Teachers in a second and third grade classroom at the Miller Research Learning Center had set up centers, each one based around a multiple intelligence. These classroom learning centers allowed students to expand their different learning styles. Incorporating Gardner's seven intelligences into the classroom enabled children to learn through their strengths and to share their expertise. Gardner's theory allowed the students to be appreciated for their talents and to recognize the talents of others. The camaraderie that developed among students and the appreciation and respect for each other's strengths were some of the clearest changes that were observed (Beckman, 1996).

Although educators were striving to make a difference in the learning of each student, many students were not learning. These students were sometimes labeled as being at risk, low achievers, or unmotivated (Chapman, 1993). Students often performed at less than their capabilities because of low expectations on the part of their teachers. Many gifted and talented students were not motivated in a traditional classroom as well. Too much focus was placed on the verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligences, while the other intelligences were being disregarded. All intelligences needed to be addressed if all children were to feel motivated and successful.

The theory of multiple intelligences transcended the classroom setting. In his interview with Gardner, Koch (1996) addressed the issue of multiple intelligences in the workplace. Gardner remarked that people needed to be matched to their jobs. The same could be said in the classroom. If teachers were preparing students for their futures, they would need to be allowed to use different intelligences to complete the tasks at hand. Therefore, teachers needed to allow students to use their interests and prior knowledge to drive instruction and lesson completion.

There is a need for a shift in American schools, a shift from teacher centered assembly line instruction to student centered cooperative learning. We know that people learn not only by themselves, but also by working with others. The acquisition of thinking abilities can be experienced, practiced, analyzed and applied effectively in cooperative settings. Higher level thinking was enhanced when children working cooperatively learned to listen, value each others contribution, take another's point of view, engage in group roles, achieve consensus and resolve conflicts (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1991). Guyton (1991) also reported these findings and added that cooperative learning strategies were particularly useful in elementary social studies, with results showing improved attitudes toward school and subject as well as improving students' psychological health.

Sullivan (1996) used the "Group Investigation Model," a cooperative learning model, in her social studies classroom. The model forced her students to take responsibility for their own learning. Within their groups, students took roles of questioners, researchers and sharers of information. She found, if done successfully, cooperative learning can empower the students as well as the teacher.

The teacher plays an important part in students' attitudes toward a subject. The methods she used in presenting the material were one factor in determining how students perceive the importance and rate their interest in a subject. Lorschbach (1997)

stated that teachers who allowed their students to use cooperative learning strategies, gave the individuals the opportunity to test the fit of their experiential world with a community of others. Those teachers also recognized that learning and making sense of what happens rests with individual learners. For real learning to occur, the students needed time to experience, reflect on the experience and their prior knowledge, and resolve any problems that arose. They also needed time to clarify, elaborate, describe, compare, negotiate, and reach a conclusion on what the experience meant to them. Lorsch (1997) realized that the learning process needed to take place within the body of the individual; however, the thoughts of a person can be supplemented by discussion with others. Sutton and Smith (1990) reported that researchers found perceptions of social studies were better in cooperative rather than competitive classrooms; the authors reasoned that changing teacher style to create a more open classroom atmosphere could generate positive changes in students' attitudes.

Brooks and Brooks (1993) contended that by using cooperative learning techniques, teachers encouraged self-initiated inquiry. Learners of all ages have been found to become more engaged by material presented by the facilitator and investigated by the learner from whole-to-part, rather than from part-to-whole. Teachers need to provide the materials and supplies, as well as act as caring mediators during teacher/student and student/student interactions.

Cooperative learning is an integral part of the Japanese school system, elementary through high school. Baris-Sanders (1997) found that Japanese students liked school and school activities more than students in other countries. She also noted the difference in dropout rates in America (25% overall) and Japan (10%). The Japanese strategy of empowering individuals while gaining group consensus is important in school and business settings and is starting to be used as a model in American businesses. The competitive global community of yesterday seems to be

evolving into a cooperative one (Guyton, 1991). The competitive nature of most schools is not a good preparation for students who will need to be citizens in a community based on cooperation, negotiation and compromise. American businessmen are realizing that many of the skills that workers now need are ones that will allow them to work effectively in small groups.

Baris-Sanders (1997) noted that in a study of Japanese kindergarten through fourth grade students, in the cooperative learning program, the subjects scored significantly higher than those in the control group on measures of supportive and friendly behavior and were better at resolving conflicts. The methods of cooperative learning are not the norm in most American classrooms. The emphasis on peer interaction may make teachers feel that they are losing control, especially when it comes to discipline. Instead of keeping students quiet and attentive to the teacher, cooperative techniques enable students to talk with each other and employ collaborative learning strategies. Instead of keeping students seated in rows during a lesson, cooperative techniques allow students to move about, visit the library, and use reference materials in the classroom (Lorsbach, 1997). For a teacher who has not incorporated these methods, getting started can be a daunting task. The possibilities for student growth and increased enjoyment and participation, however, should be worth the effort.

In a 1997 ERIC Digest, a summary of the findings by various researchers overwhelmingly supported the implementation of cooperative learning in the classroom. The studies showed that compared to other methods, cooperative learning produced increased academic achievement and productivity, greater self-esteem, and improved relationships among all students.

Teachers who are willing to take the risks of cooperative learning will be pleased, as will the students at the outcomes in regard to interest. Cooperative

learning techniques can make a subject like social studies that is too often neglected more exciting to students than the traditional methods. Excited and interested children will grow to be active participants with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed in our democratic society (Guyton, 1991).

Providing journal time for students gives them an opportunity to reflect on their learning and develop their skills of metacognition. Burke, Fogarty, and Belgrad (1994) identified several types of journals, including learning logs and reflective journals. Both types enabled students to set goals and monitor their own growth. Journals also aided students in the development of their interpersonal and reflecting skills. In the Swan and White study (1990), about helping children learn to reflect, there were three identified objectives. The teachers wanted the children to increase links between what they were learning and what they already knew, to increase links between what they were learning and their experiences outside school, and to become more active in learning, through questioning things they didn't understand and determining the effectiveness of their work habits. Journal entries may have included; What I did, What I learned, Questions I would like answered, or Areas where I had problems. This allowed children to reflect personally on what the class or cooperative group had just done. The student had the opportunity to set attainable goals both academically and socially by reflecting on what he had learned. A student who had time to reflect on his learning had time to appreciate what he had learned (Davis, Cameron, Politano, Gregory 1992). The student had more control of his own learning and had a written record of achievements that he could refer back to and share with teachers, peers and parents. This involvement in his own learning was a motivating factor in a student's perception of school and his enjoyment of a subject. Siddall (1996) had been using response journals in his class for many years. Siddall stated that response journals were a way for students to construct their own learning. By giving students the

opportunity to respond in journals about what was said in class, students developed a deeper understanding of the content.

The use of journals, and especially the frequency of their use must be considered judiciously however. In the Swan and White study (1990), John Baird, a science teacher, reported that in 1985 he assigned his students to write in their journals after each activity. The benefits of journaling were not explained to the students and so it became a redundant, boring process that had no purpose. They came to dislike the process so much and it became such a chore to them, that he abandoned the use of journals altogether.

When using journals, the teacher needs to explain some of the benefits of journaling to the students. Journaling allows the student to be in control of his learning and to think through the process of writing (Pappas, Keifer, & Levstik 1995). Kajiwara-Ansai (1996) had also used journals for over six years. Kajiwara-Ansai noted journals were a way for teachers to see through the eyes of their students exactly what the students were understanding. Teachers needed to respond to these journals and focus on the content, reminding the children of important items that they missed and praising students on interesting facts that they noticed or discovered. This gave teachers a better sense of students' understanding from the class activity or discussion (Fisher & Terry 1990). The teacher may also write along with the children and share her writing with them, thereby reinforcing what she thinks is important about the topic.

Short stints of writing can clarify student learning. Writing can engage them to question, summarize, notice and categorize. So often students sit passively in front of the teacher, lacking motivation and absorbing very little of the material being presented. Chenfeld (1987) stated that writing needed to be seen as a natural activity, not an event. Young children share an enthusiasm for writing and if made a part of their daily activities, as natural as playing, it becomes an activity from which they can

grow and learn. When a child's writing is read and understood the child becomes jubilant. In many schools writing becomes an event and therefore the natural learning process is not given an opportunity to develop.

"Remember that writing, reading, oral language, and listening are all strands of language learning that are inextricably connected. They are naturally linked parts of a complex, dynamic process. Writing is a reading activity. Reading is a writing activity. Oral Language through both reading and writing helps children maintain focus and interest." (Chenfeld, 1987, p325)

By using journals as an integral part of the curriculum, the teacher can become more aware of her students' prior knowledge. It is possible to teach in ways that allow children to experience their curiosity about their immediate environment while bringing more global aspects of the world into the classroom. Through journal entries, teachers can help students see the importance of social studies and become as interested in social studies as they are in reading and math (Calkins, 1994).

The review of this literature shows the positive effects of using the Multiple Intelligences Theory in the classroom and how it allows students to strengthen their individual learning styles. Teachers who allow their students to work cooperatively, while also encouraging the use of multiple intelligences, better motivate their students. Writing in journals helps students to evaluate their own learning. Journals are also a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the lesson through the eyes of students. The literature reflects that through incorporating multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, and journals teachers can better motivate their students.

Project Objectives and Process

As a result of implementing the use of multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, and journaling in the social studies curriculum, during the period of September 1997 - January 1998, the targeted fourth grade students will show an increase in motivation as measured by student surveys and teacher observations.

In order to accomplish this, the following processes are necessary:

1. Develop lesson plans instructing students in the areas of each of the Multiple Intelligences.
2. Develop lesson plans that implement the Multiple Intelligences in the social studies curriculum.
3. Develop lesson plans to teach skills for cooperative learning.
4. Develop instructional units to implement cooperative learning in the social studies curriculum.
5. Observe student behavior during cooperative learning activities.
6. Create journals for students.
7. Model reflection techniques.
8. Require students to write in journals 2 -3 times per week.
9. Assess student journals.

Project Action Plan

Week #1

Administer Student Survey
Administer Teacher Survey
3 - 5 Initial Class Observations of Students

Week #2

Introduce concept of Multiple Intelligences
Conduct 3 Preliminary Multiple Intelligence Lessons
using Rain Forest Theme>Introduce and Discuss Reflection Journals
Model Reflection Journal Entry
Following Multiple Intelligence Lesson
complete Reflection Journal Entry as a Class
Students complete first independent journal entry
Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections
3 observations of students will be made during classes for 15 minutes each

Week #3

Introduce Cooperative Learning Rules and Roles
Assign base groups
Conduct 2 lessons implementing cooperative learning groups
and Multiple Intelligences using Rain Forest theme
Conduct additional Multiple Intelligence lesson
Students will journal 3 times following lessons
Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections
3 observations of students will be made during classes
for 15 minutes each

Week #4

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach the Continents and Oceans
Students will continue to write in journals
Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections
3 Observations of students for 15 minutes
will continue to be made

Week #5

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach How to Read a Map
Students will continue to write in journals
Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections

3 Observations of students for 15 minutes will continue to be made

Week #6

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach How to Read a Map

Students will continue to write in journals

Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections

3 Observations of students for 15 minutes each
will continue to be made

Administer Student Survey second time to see if
there has been any change in attitude

Week #7

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach How to Read a Map

Students will continue to write in journals

Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections

3 Observations of students for 15 minutes each
will continue to be made

Week #8

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach How to Read a Map

Students will continue to write in journals

Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections

3 Observations of students for 15 minutes each
will continue to be made

Week #9

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach Land Forms in the United States

Students will continue to write in journals

Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections

3 Observations of students for 15 minutes each
will continue to be made

Week #10

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach Rivers in the United States

Students will continue to write in journals

Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections

3 Observations of students for 15 minutes each
will continue to be made

Week #11

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach about Hawaii

Students will continue to write in journals

Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections

3 Observations of students for 15 minutes each
will continue to be made

Week #12

2-3 Lessons will be developed and implemented using
Multiple Intelligences and Cooperative Learning to
teach about Alaska

Students will continue to write in journals

Teacher will assess and respond to student reflections

3 Observations of students for 15 minutes each
will continue to be made

Week #13

Administer Student Survey for final measure of motivation

Compile data from observation checklists

Collect Student Journals

Draw Conclusions

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects on the intervention, student observation checklists will be used three times a week for fifteen minute intervals. Student surveys will be given to the students to assess changes in levels of motivation. These will be administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the twelve week period. Finally, student reflection journal entries will be written two-three times per week. These journal entries will be reviewed and responded to by the teacher.

CHAPTER 4
PROJECT OVERVIEW
Historical Description

The objective of this action research study was to increase student motivation in the area of social studies through the use of the multiple intelligences theory, cooperative learning techniques, and writing in reflection journals. The implementation of the multiple intelligence theory, cooperative learning, and reflective journals were selected to effect the desired changes.

During the first week of implementation, a letter, shown in Appendix D, was sent to parents informing them of the action to be taken. Students were surveyed on their feelings about the subject of social studies. They were asked to rank the different subjects studied in fourth grade. In order to learn more about student interest in social studies, students were also asked subject specific questions. An example of the survey can be seen in Appendix B.

Teachers at the targeted school were asked to fill out a survey regarding social studies instruction. The survey can be found in Appendix C. The results of the survey showed a lack of interest by teachers as cited in Chapter 3. These results laid the ground work for the research. A change in techniques by the teacher was meant to bring about a change in student motivation.

The multiple intelligences theory was introduced and taught directly during the second week of implementation. One activity required students to use their prior knowledge to brainstorm different classroom activities. These brainstorming activities

were then labeled with the appropriate multiple intelligences. The goal of these early activities was to teach the students the terms associated with each of the seven multiple intelligences. Original plans called for three preliminary lessons concerning the multiple intelligences theory. The researcher/teacher condensed these lessons into two days after observing that the students had grasped the basic concepts ahead of schedule. Keeping with the agenda the teacher modeled and completed a journal reflection. Following the example, the students independently completed a journal entry. In addition to these classroom activities, three initial observations were made by the research team.

During the third week of the intervention cooperative learning skills were taught. Rules of cooperative learning were interjected into multiple intelligences lessons. The Continental Rap was a musical/rhythmic lesson that incorporated cooperative learning techniques. A lesson plan and copy of the rap can be found in Appendix E. Students were assigned to cooperative learning groups, given specific roles, and then worked together to complete projects. During week three only one journal entry and one observation were made, deviating from the action plan which called for three of each. Reflections were decreased due to lack of time because of schedule changes which required the students to go to a different teacher. The researchers had unforeseen obstacles such as duties and student conferences which only allowed time for one observation.

During weeks four, five, and six, lessons were taught through the theme of the rain forest. Lessons using cooperative learning and the multiple intelligences were implemented in accordance with the plan. For example, after reading a story about rain forest people, cooperative groups constructed a Venn diagram comparing the rain forest way of life to life in the targeted community.

Reflections in journals were written twice during the three week period and seven observations were made. At the end of week six, student surveys were administered.

Beginning with week seven and continuing through week fourteen, multiple intelligences and cooperative learning lessons were taught involving the topic of the United States, focusing on geography. Two examples of lessons presented include creating topographical salt dough maps of the United States and constructing a wall size river mural with all its amenities. Lesson plans for these activities can be found in Appendices F and G. Four journal entries and twelve observations were completed during these weeks. Again, time constraints and schedule changes required a deviation from the original action plan. Student surveys were distributed to conclude the intervention. (Appendix B)

Presentation and Analysis of Results

As a method of measuring the impact of using multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, and reflective journaling on student motivation in social studies, student attitude surveys were administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the research. Results of the first survey were presented in Chapter 3. The second survey was conducted at the end of the sixth week. Results of the inquiry showed an increase in the number of students who chose social studies as the favorite subject. Figure 4 shows that 25% of the students reported that social studies was their favorite subject. Those who chose social studies as their favorite subject cited activities such as the Continental Rap, studying the rain forest, and "all the fun things". Most of the students in the class responded favorably when asked how they feel about social studies. In response to the question, "What do you enjoy about social studies?" 20% of the students enjoyed the Continental Rap and 15% said they liked group work. There were still 15% of the students who found it unnecessary to learn about other people and cultures. Ten percent of the students reported it as "none of our business".

Unlike the first survey, none of the students stated that social studies was their least favorite subject. This is a change from five to zero showing that twenty-five percent of the students have changed their opinion.

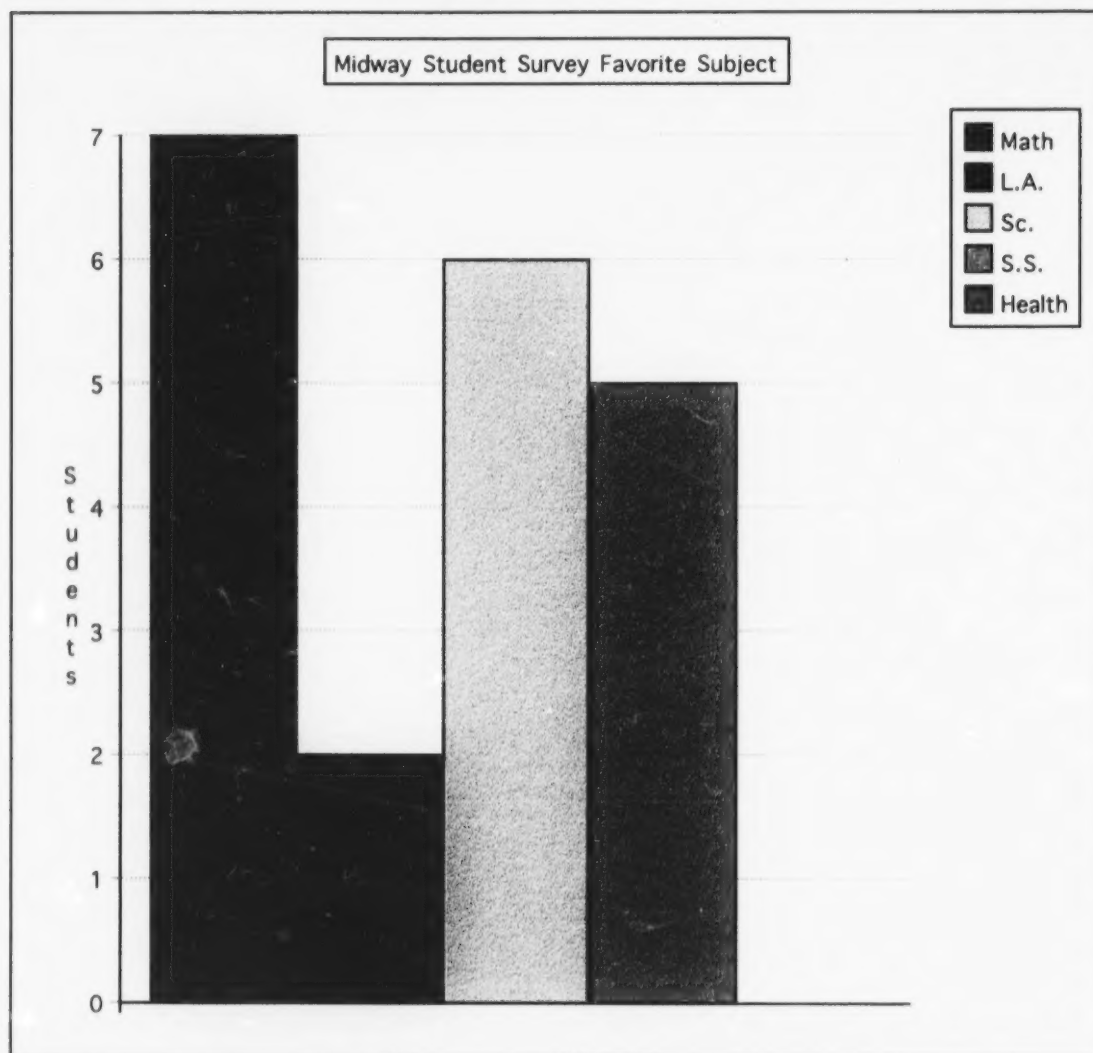


Figure 5 Midway Results of Students' Favorite Subjects

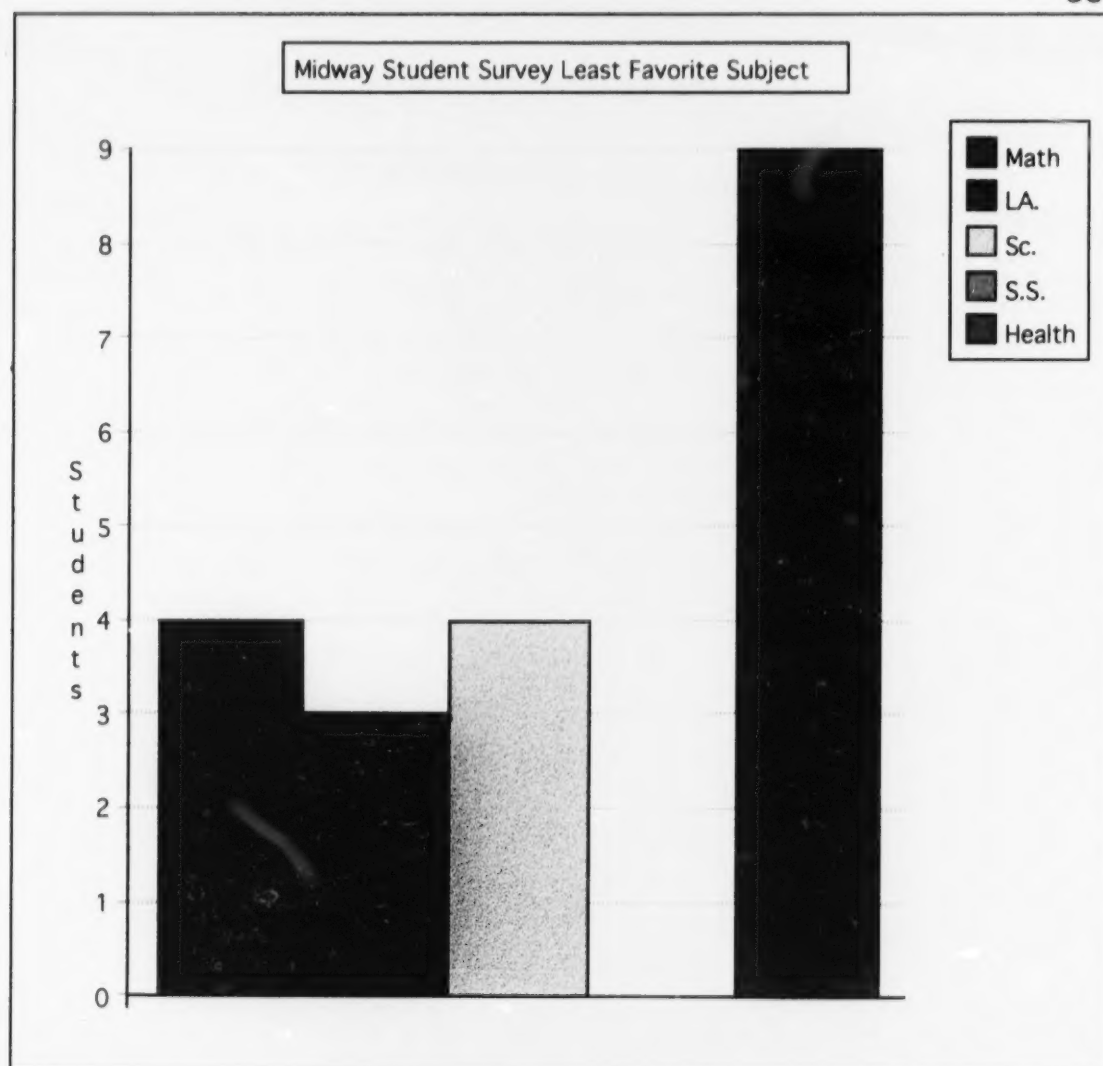


Figure 6 Midway Results of Students' Least Favorite Subject

Following the completion of the research, student surveys were conducted for a third and final time. More than half of the targeted class chose social studies as the favorite subject in the final survey. Students cited many activities of varying intelligences when asked how they felt about studying social studies. For example, one student said that he enjoyed social studies, especially activities such as creating a state report with a partner, making salt dough maps, and the Continental Rap. Once again, during this final survey, no students reported social studies as their least favorite subject. On the contrary, all but one student ranked social studies as their first or second favorite subject. Although interest in social studies has increased, fifteen percent of the students still find other people and cultures irrelevant. And one student did not like the past and therefore did not think it was important to learn about history.

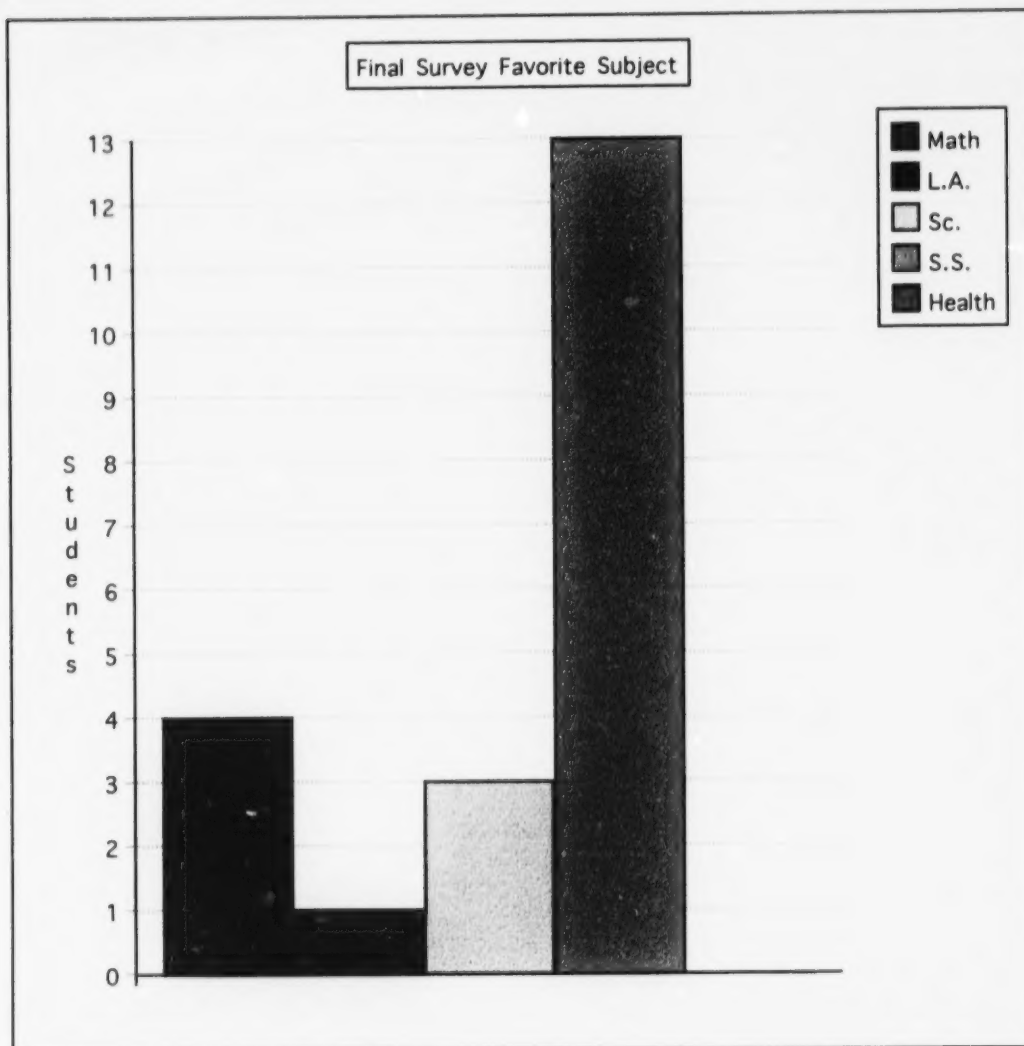


Figure 7 Final Results of Students' Favorite Subject

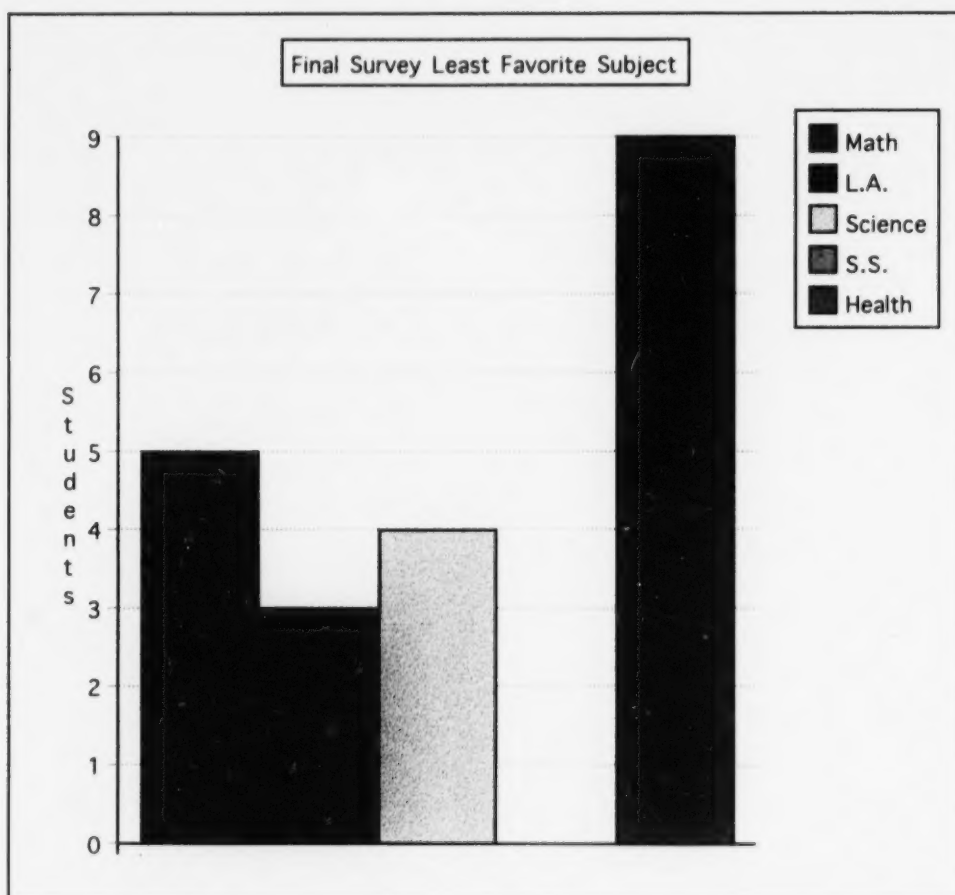


Figure 8 Final Results of Students' Least Favorite Subject

In addition to the surveys, twenty-three observations of the targeted class were made. During visits by observers, the class participated in twelve cooperative learning activities and used a variety of intelligences. Observers recorded the types of activities as reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Types of Lessons Presented

Multiple Intelligence	Number of Lessons
Musical/Rhythmic	2
Bodily/Kinesthetic	6
Logical/Mathematical	3
Visual/Spatial	13
Verbal/Linguistic	13
Interpersonal	11
Intrapersonal	2

As part of the observation checklist, the researchers were to rate the level of excitement within the class. Table 2 shows the types of lessons and the student interest that was exhibited as reported by the researchers. The activities employing the traditionally less used intelligences elicited more enthusiasm, such as salt dough map making.

Table 2

Level Of Student Excitement During Lessons

High	Average	Low
Partner State Reports	Jigsawing	Labeling Maps
Globe Game	Journaling	Review Questions
Continental Rap	Venn Diagram	
Base Group Brainstorming		
Salt Dough Map Making		
River Building		

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research team on the implementation, student motivation and interest in the area of social studies showed a measurable improvement. The use of multiple intelligences and cooperative learning strategies brought about a change in student motivation. Researchers found three things to be highly motivating in this social studies classroom; musical/rhythmic lessons, visual/spatial lessons with graphic organizers and cooperative learning.

The continental rap focused on the musical/rhythmic intelligence. Students cited this activity numerous times on their surveys when referring to what made social studies enjoyable. The researcher/teacher reported that students were able to recall the information from the rap after an extended period of time. During open house a video tape of the students doing the rap was shown continuously. The airing of this presentation allowed the students to feel pride in their accomplishment through the sharing of their knowledge.

Visual and spatial lessons with graphic organizers were an integral part of the social studies classroom. The aptitude of the researcher/teacher with this intelligence

impacted the students' receptiveness. The presentation of the material, using graphic organizers, made the information easier for the students to appropriate.

A third strategy, cooperative learning, was found to be successful in the social studies classroom. Students acquired and used social skills as they completed classroom activities. These skills helped to create a more positive environment in the classroom. Working in groups gave students the opportunity to share ideas and draw upon individual strengths of the group members. Students were assigned roles within cooperative groups allowing them to feel in control of their own learning. In many activities, teams of students became experts on a specific topic. As experts, they then shared their new knowledge with the class. One example of "students as teachers" was the river construction activity. Each group constructed a part of the river. As a class, groups presented their parts and students watched as the parts came together to make the whole river.

It is the recommendation of the research team that teachers take the time to learn multiple intelligence and cooperative learning strategies and incorporate them into their social studies curriculum. These strategies showed a positive effect on student motivation in the social studies classroom, however journaling and the observations did not produce the expected results.

Reflective journaling was scheduled to be completed three times per week. In the targeted school fourth grade students traveled to different classrooms for English. This did not afford the researcher/teacher the time necessary to have students journal. Also, a lack of experience in reflective journal writing made this a daunting task for the targeted students. Therefore, journaling was not completed as often as originally anticipated. Reflective journaling would work better in a fully integrated classroom.

Researcher observations were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. First, classroom teachers as observers had many demands placed on their time. Recess

duty, student situations, as well as the necessary classroom preparations made regular observations difficult. Release time for the teachers to observe or outside observers would be possible alternatives. The research team also found the checklist to be insufficient. Three different observers using this checklist discovered its construction to lack objectivity. Items on the list were too ambiguous. It is the opinion of this research team that a new tool be designed for use in further research. A final concern with the observations was the amount of time spent watching the targeted class. Fifteen minute sessions were scheduled and found to be too short a time period for adequate observations. Researchers were unable to watch a complete lesson due to their own classroom responsibilities. Again, release time for observations or outside observers may have afforded the time necessary to make more detailed accounts.

The researchers found the project to be a worthwhile, because social studies has been a subject that has not found a meaningful place in many school curriculums. The interventions of the action research team improved student motivation. Through using multiple intelligences and cooperative learning, the researchers and students discovered a world of excitement in a fourth grade social studies classroom.

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Appendix A
Student Observation Checklist

Student Observation Checklist

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Type of activity					
2	Time of day					
3	Off task behavior					
4	Discussion participation					
5		High		Avg.		Low
6	Level of excitement					
7		Fat				Skinny
8	Types of comments					
9	Types of questions					

Appendix B
Student Survey

Student Survey

1. Rank in order your favorite subjects. (Start with 1 as your most favorite.)

- _____ Math
- _____ Language Arts (reading and writing)
- _____ Science
- _____ Social Studies
- _____ Health

2. Why did you choose that subject as your most favorite subject?

3. How do you feel about studying social studies?

4. Is it important to know about the past? Why?

5. Is it important to know how to read a map? Why?

6. Is it important to know about other people and cultures? Why?

7. What do you enjoy about social studies?

8. What do you find frustrating about social studies?

9. What would make social studies more fun?

10. What would you like to learn about in Social Studies this year?

Appendix C
Teacher Survey

Teacher Survey

1. Approximately how often do you teach social studies?
2. If you do not teach social studies everyday why not?
3. What time of day do you teach social studies?
4. What would allow you to improve your social studies curriculum?
5. How important is social studies in your grade level curriculum?
1. Very important 2. Important 3. Undecided 4. Slightly important 5. Not important

Comments:

6. Rank the following subject areas in order of importance.

(1 being most important)

- _____ Math
- _____ Language Arts
- _____ Social Studies
- _____ Science
- _____ Health

7. Rank the following subject areas in order of teaching enjoyment.

(1 being most enjoyable)

- _____ Math
- _____ Language Arts
- _____ Social Studies
- _____ Science
- _____ Health

8. What are some activities you use to teach social studies?

9. Overall, do you think your students have a good prior knowledge base in social studies?

1	2	3	4	5
High		adequate		low

10. In general, do you think your students enjoy studying social studies?

1	2	3	4	5
High		adverage		low

11. What is your attitude towards teaching social studies?

Appendix D Parent Letter



August 25, 1997

Dear Fourth Grade Families,

I and my colleagues, Miss French and Ms. Laurin, Mrs. McMahan, are working on a Master's program together through Saint Xavier university. We are exploring the effects motivation and interest in the social studies classroom.

We would like to use your child's social studies classroom as our target group. The children in the target group will not be expected to do anything out of the ordinary; we will just be monitoring their interest levels periodically. When writing our research findings, no names will be used.

We do need permission for your child to participate. Please read and sign the permission slip below and return it to school as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Mrs. Vickrey, Miss French, Ms. Laurin, Mrs. McMahan

 ___ I give my child, _____, permission to participate in the research project.

___ I would prefer that my child, _____, does not participate in the project.

Signed, _____
 (parent or guardian)

Appendix E

Continental Rap Lesson Plan

Lesson Name: Continental Rap

Targeted Intelligence: Musical/Rhythmic

Supporting Intelligences: Visual/Spatial and Bodily/Kinesthetic

Length of time: 6, 40 minute periods

Materials: copies of rap, outlines of each of the seven continents, crayons, markers, world desk maps

Activities:

1. Read rap aloud, as a class, to find the rhythm and beat.
2. Repeat the name of the continents a few times and have the students repeat them.
3. Look at each continent as it is described in the rap.
4. As you discuss each continent, have the students find it on the world desk maps. Discuss each place mentioned in the rap and all new vocabulary words. Be sure that everyone understands what all the versus mean.
5. Break the rap down to parts and assign each student a part. The refrain will be said all together.
6. Practice saying the rap as a class with each student saying his/her part and the class saying the refrain.
7. Pair students together to practice saying his/her part with a partner. This practice allows the students to begin memorizing their part of the rap.
8. Divide the class into groups according to what continent they rap about. Give each group the outline of the continent that they rap.
9. Have the students write the name of the continent on their poster. Also have them color it and write two facts about the continent. If they have a continent that has tropical rain forests, they need to color the area where they are found green. If their continent does not have rain forests they need to write that and explain why.
10. Practice the rap as a class with each group holding up their poster of the continent that they are rapping about.
11. Once you have practiced and everyone seems to know his/her part well, video tape the class performing the rap and allow them to watch the tape.

There are seven continents upon the plant Earth.
Including north America our native land of birth.

Each continent is different
in size, shape, and style
To learn about them is easy.
It only takes awhile.

North America,
South America,
Europe,
and Asia,
Africa,
Antarctica,
a-n-d Australia.

(Repeat three times - FASTER each time!)

You start with **North America**,
you look around and see,
The Rockies and the Mississippi
and more geography.
The continent is special.
It's the one we call our home.
From northern most Alaska to
warm coasts we roam.

And then there's **South America**,
the Latin lands we say,
The Amazon and Andes and
lot of sun each day.

The driest deserts in the world,
the highest waterfall.
Strange plants and such odd creatures,
you could never name them all.

North America,
South America,
Europe,
and Asia,
Africa,
Antarctica,
a-n-d Australia.

Then we jump to **Europe**,
the farthest to the north,
From Italy to Lapland,
where the reindeer wander forth.
Small nations, lots of people,
very crowded here.
And filled with so much history,
that people hold it dear.

Connected we find **Asia**,
the largest land in size.
And the largest population,
so many girls and guys.
The largest mountain in the world,
and several really small.
With locked and guarded borders, and
the Ancient China Wall.

North America,
South America,
Europe,
and Asia,
Africa,
Antarctica,
a-n-d Australia.

Southwest you find **Africa**,
the great emerging land.
From jungles in the central part
to all the northern sand.
Big game animals and empires of the past.
Leaders once in history,
but in modern times they're last.

Antarctica, an empty land,
all filled with ice and snow.
There is not too much about it
that we understand and know.
Lots of Penguins, Arctic birds,
and tons and tons of ice.
You wouldn't like to live there
cuz the climate's not so nice.

North America,
South America,
Europe,
and Asia,
Africa,
Antarctica,
a-n-d Australia.

Australia is the final one,
the land they call "Down Under."
Koala bears and Kangaroos,
it really is a wonder.
South of the equator,
a land that's very old
Once settled as a prison state,
and now a nation bold.

That's the seven continents,
we really know them all.
We learned them with a crazy rap
and really had a ball.

North America,
South America,
Europe,
and Asia,
Africa,
Antarctica,
a-n-d Australia.

Appendix F
Salt Dough Maps Lesson Plan

Lesson Name: Salt Dough Maps

Targeted Intelligence: Bodily/Kinesthetic

Supporting Intelligence: Visual/Spatial

Length of Time: 2, 40 minute periods

Materials: salt, flour, water, Large United States Maps, cardboard, paint, paint brushes

Activities:

1. Mix salt dough ahead of time:
One cup salt, three cups flour, one cup of water will make about three maps.
2. Give each student a United States Map and have them put it on a piece of cardboard.
3. Hand out the salt dough and tell the students to put it on the map and work it into the shape of the U.S.
4. After they form the shape of the U.S., tell them to begin to form the land forms discussed in class. They must form the Rocky Mt, Appalachian Mt, Central Plains, Great Plains, Coastal Plains, Great Basin, and also show where deserts are found.
5. When finished forming the map, they should be left to dry over night.
6. After they dry overnight, painting can begin. Assign a color to each land form and have the students paint the maps according to the assigned colors.
7. When they are done painting the maps, students need to make a map key that explains what each color represents.
8. Move around the room and ask each student to tell you about each of the land forms on their salt dough maps.

Appendix G
River Wall Diagram Lesson Plan

Lesson Name: River Wall Diagram

Targeted Intelligence: Bodily/Kinesthetic

Supporting Intelligence: Visual/Spatial

Length of Time: 1, 40 minute period

Materials: Blue butcher paper, construction paper various colors, tape, glue, scissors

Activities:

1. After learning the definitions for the parts of a river, students will construct a large river on the back wall of our classroom.
2. Assign each group a part of the river to construct:
the river itself, its source, its mouth, delta, silt, sand bars, banks, river basin, tributaries, dam, dikes.
Each group must make the part and also a sign that labels the part they made.
3. As a class put the river together. Hang up the river itself and have each group add the part and label it made. Be sure the groups explain to the class the part of the river they are adding and labeling.
4. Use the river as a review daily for learning the parts of a river and their importance.